

# NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Indiana Seat Belt Usage Rate Reaches a Record High*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN. – Hoosiers are buckling up in record numbers, according to observational field surveys conducted following the May, 2007 “Click It or Ticket” enforcement campaign. Data collected by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute’s Traffic Safety Division indicates that 87.9 percent of all drivers and passengers in Indiana wear their seat belts. The increase comes as Governor Mitch Daniels signed a law on May 10, 2007 strengthening Indiana’s seat belt law, which requires that all occupants be buckled in seating positions regardless of the type of vehicle driven. This figure, the highest in state history, represents a 3.6 percent increase compared to the 84.3 percent seat belt rate last year.

“This is a major victory for traffic safety in the state of Indiana,” said Mike Cunegin, executive director of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI). “We are confident that this increase in seat belt usage will translate into lives saved on Indiana’s roadways. This level of compliance shows that Hoosiers now recognize that buckling up can drastically reduce death and serious injury on our roads.”

This year, the highest rate of seat belt usage, more than 93 percent, was among female drivers and passengers. Male drivers and passengers, in contrast, were buckled up at a rate of roughly 82 percent. Seat belt usage among pickup truck drivers and passengers increased by more than 10 percent - from 54 percent in 2006, to nearly 65 percent reported this year.

“The Indiana Department of Transportation invests millions of dollars annually to provide safe roads for Hoosiers, yet clicking a seatbelt can do more to protect motorists from death or serious injury than any tool in our safety toolbox,” said INDOT Commissioner Karl B. Browning. “We are extremely pleased that more Hoosiers than ever before have committed to buckling up as they travel Indiana’s roadways.”

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Governor’s Council on  
Impaired and Dangerous Driving



101 West Washington St. • Suite 1170 East Tower • Indianapolis, IN 46204

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[www.in.gov/cji](http://www.in.gov/cji)

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During the “Click It or Ticket” enforcement campaign law enforcement officers statewide cited nearly 20,000 drivers and passengers for not complying with Indiana’s new primary seat belt law.

“Traffic accidents are inevitable,” said Paul Whitesell, superintendent of the Indiana State Police. “The severity of injuries is quite often optional. Anybody who studies the matter seriously recognizes that seat belts save lives and reduce the severity of injury. Those of us in law enforcement are encouraged by newer statistics on seat belt use and are hopeful that such use continues to improve.”

“With continued enforcement and education to the public it is very possible that we may break our current record high and reach a 90 percent seat belt compliance rate next year,” said Ryan Klitzsch, Traffic Safety division director at the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. “This would make us one of the safest states in the nation and will certainly save countless lives every year, something we should all be proud of.”

*The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving serves as the public opinion catalyst and the implementing body for statewide action to reduce death and injury on Indiana roadways. The Council provides grant funding, training, coordination and ongoing support to state and local traffic safety advocates.*

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